

**Judith Zaffirini**

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**From:** Harold Cook <hc@haroldcook.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 06, 2009 7:55 AM  
**To:** Harold Cook  
**Subject:** DEM CAUCUS: Fort Worth editorial against voter ID

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**Editorial: Texas GOP senators gain advantage on voter-ID bill**

Republican state senators, a 19-12 majority in their chamber, have decided to give a voter-identification bill a special political advantage in this year's legislative session. It's as if they believe nothing could be as important as victory on this issue.

Shame on them. They even trounced objections from minority Democrats who said topics like education, job creation, skyrocketing college tuition and children's health insurance deserve at least equal priority.

Only one GOP senator, John Carona of Dallas, broke ranks Jan. 14 when the Senate voted to allow a simple majority of senators to schedule a voter-ID bill for debate. On all other issues, two-thirds of the Senate must agree before a bill can be debated, a bar that Republicans can't clear without help from Democrats. They slipped past the "two-thirds rule" only by amending Senate rules on the second day of the session.

Carona said he favors voter ID but objects to the extraordinary measures his Republican colleagues are taking to ensure passage of the bill. A voter-ID bill passed the House two years ago, but Democrats blocked it in the Senate.

On its surface, requiring identification makes some sense. Advocates argue that poll workers can't know for sure who potential voters really are unless they show some form of government-issued photo identification. That leaves the voting system, a cornerstone of democracy, ripe for widespread fraud, they say.

But many Democrats object, saying this is a ruse for disenfranchising some of their key constituents. Poor, elderly and minority voters have a tougher time affording and obtaining the required ID, they say. Plus, they point out, no evidence of widespread voter fraud along these lines has been found in Texas.

Still, there's no use whining about it. Republican senators have carried out the most crucial part of their power play on this issue. By giving voter ID a giant "king's X" on the two-thirds rule, they've ensured their victory as long as they enforce intraparty discipline and hold ranks.

A different outcome will occur only if some GOP senators, like Carona, show themselves to be brave individuals unwilling to join a stampede. The voter-ID debate, on Senate Bill 362 by Sen. Troy Fraser of Horseshoe Bay, is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Tuesday in the Senate chamber in Austin.

At the very least, voter-ID supporters should prove the need for this restriction on Texas voters by showing that there have been voter fraud problems in this state.

This should be by solid proof, not hearsay or speculation. It should include evidence that people have been charged and convicted of abusing the voting privilege by trying to pass themselves off as someone else at the polls.

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